

Deuteronomy 32:5-52 - Thursday, January 19th, 2012

(5) "They have corrupted themselves; *They are* not His children, Because of their blemish: A perverse and crooked generation. (6) Do you thus deal with the LORD, O foolish and unwise people? *Is* He not your Father, *who* bought you? Has He not made you and established you? (7) "Remember the days of old, Consider the years of many generations. Ask your father, and he will show you; Your elders, and they will tell you: (8) When the Most High divided their inheritance to the nations, When He separated the sons of Adam, He set the boundaries of the peoples According to the number of the children of Israel. (9) For the LORD's portion *is* His people; Jacob *is* the place of His inheritance.

- It's important to understand that the purpose of this song was be a witness against them for when yet future they would turn away from the Lord.
- What's interesting about the verses we just read is that God is reminding them of all He had done for them, and all that He had gave to them.
- He takes it a step further saying that if they don't remember all of this then they were to go to their fathers and elders so they could tell them.

- I think the take away here is that we're all so prone to forget all that God has done for us in that He has bought us, made us, and established us.
- Furthermore, we're also prone to forget how much God has given to us so much so we would do well to be reminded by our fathers and elders.
- This sort of suggests that forgetting could be, at least in part, one of the main reasons and chief causes of much of the backsliding by believers.

(10) "He found him in a desert land And in the wasteland, a howling wilderness; He encircled him, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye.

- This is interesting for a number of reasons not the least of which is that God sees Israel as "the apple of His eye." What does this really mean?
- The thought is that the apple of the eye is speaking of the pupil of the eye, which makes sense by virtue of the context of what verse ten says.
- Namely, that God kept Jacob as the "apple of His eye," in the midst of the dangerous wilderness, as He both directed him, and protected him.

Psalms 17:8-9 NIV Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings (9) from the wicked who assail me, from my mortal enemies who surround me.

- Actually, there's more to this than what meets the eye, pun intended. In the Hebrew, this is literally translated as "the little man of the eye."
- This fits with the Latin word for the pupil of the eye which is from the word "doll," or, "little man," if you prefer. It's where a little man or doll is.
- In other words, the thought is when you look in someone else's eye you see a reflection of yourself that looks like a little man, or doll, if you will.

- This carries with it the idea that in order to see your reflection in the pupil of their eye, you would have to be very close in proximity to their eye.
- This is precisely the point! God is making the point that Israel is both precious to Him, and close to Him, in so much that they're in God's eye.
- When Israel was close to the Lord, and had not turned away from the Lord, He would protect, and as we'll see next, direct them as well.

- This brings us to the even deeper meaning, and one for which I'd like to spend a little bit of time on for reasons that I think you'll "see" shortly.
- When God has Moses write this song to be a witness against them, His purpose is to bring a rebellious and wandering Israel back to Himself.
- This is the heart of God, He is a gracious God, and He desires for us to return to Him. I think of David returning to the Lord after hiding his sin.

Psalms 32:5-9 NKJV I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," And You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah (6) For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You In a time when You may be found; Surely in a flood of great waters They shall not come near him. (7) You *are* my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall surround me with songs of deliverance. Selah (8) I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye. (9) Do not be like the horse *or* like the mule, *Which* have no understanding, Which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, Else they will not come near you.

- Notice that up to verse seven, David is crying out to the Lord, then in verse eight, the Lord responds by saying He will guide David with His eye.
- After saying that, God then tells David to not be like the horse or like the mule, which must be harnessed with bit and bridle to come near you.
- Here's the question; why does God tell him not to be like the mule and the horse? We know the mule is stubborn, but what about the horse?

- In 2008, when at the Calvary Chapel Senior Pastor's conference in California, I heard this taught by Rob Verdeyen of Calvary Chapel Corvallis.
- He shared how after preaching a sermon on Psalm 32, a lady in his church approached him very humbly introducing herself as an equestrian.
- As a skilled horse trainer, she told him how she guides a horse she's had for over 15 years, by simply using her eyes because it is so in sync.

- When he shared that, it just opened the meaning up to me, and all the other pastor's that were in attendance, in such a grand and glorious way.
- It's for this reason that this understanding of "the apple of my eye" changes the whole complexion of its meaning. It now makes more sense.
- Like David, and the Israelites who had turned from the Lord as the apple of His eye, God will guide them back to Him and He will use His eye.

- One more thought before we move on to verse eleven. God will first try to use His eye to guide us in the direction that He would have us to go.
- However, if we're wild and unbroken then He may have to take more drastic measures. Instead, He may have to use both the bit and the bridle.
- Now, it's vital that we know this is God's last resort and not His first response, which is why verse ten says that God will first try to instruct them.

(11) As an eagle stirs up its nest, Hovers over its young, Spreading out its wings, taking them up, Carrying them on its wings, (12) *So* the LORD alone led him, And *there was* no foreign god with him. (13) "He made him ride in the heights of the earth, That he might eat the produce of the fields; He made him draw honey from the rock, And oil from the flinty rock; (14) Curds from the cattle, and milk of the flock, With fat of lambs; And rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats, With the choicest wheat; And you drank wine, the blood of the grapes.

- On Sunday mornings in our study of the book of Romans we're seeing the grace of God in a whole new way as we revisit preconceived notions.
- I would suggest that this is what God wants the Israelite to see namely, that He is a gracious God and has only love and grace when they return.
- The imagery is very poignant in describing God as carrying and leading Jacob that he might draw honey from the rock, because of God's grace.

(15) "But Jeshurun grew fat and kicked; You grew fat, you grew thick, You are obese! Then he forsook God *who* made him, And scornfully esteemed the Rock of his salvation.

- Verse fifteen packs a powerful punch in how it hits the proverbial nail on the head in that it identifies what caused Jeshurun/Israel to forget God.
- It's when we prosper and grow fat that we forget the Lord and all that he's done, sometimes under the banner of thinking we had a part in it.
- This triggers the account of the sin of Sodom. Their sin was not supremely sexual rather, it was that they had become so prosperous and fat.

Ezekiel 16:49-50 NIV "Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy. (50) They were haughty and did detestable things before me. Therefore I did away with them as you have seen.

(16) They provoked Him to jealousy with foreign *gods*; With abominations they provoked Him to anger. (17) They sacrificed to demons, not to God, *To gods* they did not know, To new *gods*, new arrivals That your fathers did not fear. (18) Of the Rock *who* begot you, you are unmindful, And have forgotten the God who fathered you.

- If you think about it, this part of the song is kind of intense because it implies that there is a demonic connection with the worship of false gods.
- Perhaps more specifically this would refer to idols, which can be defined as anything or anyone that we devote our affection and or adoration.
- This would seem to indicate that there is a demonic component to certain practices that God's people might find themselves participating in.

(19) "And when the LORD saw *it*, He spurned *them*, Because of the provocation of His sons and His daughters. (20) And He said: 'I will hide My face from them, I will see what their end *will be*, For they *are* a perverse generation, Children in whom *is* no faith. (21) They have provoked Me to jealousy by *what* is not God; They have moved Me to anger by their foolish idols. But I will provoke them to jealousy by *those who are* not a nation; I will move them to anger by a foolish nation.

- God is saying that He will provoke the nation of Israel to jealousy by the Gentile nations to whom He moves His blessing and prospering to.
- In response to their perversion and provocation, it's as if God will transfer to the Gentiles, that which He would have freely given to Israel.
- Perhaps another way of saying it would be that God will provoke the nation of Israel to become jealous of Gentiles relationship with their God.

Romans 10:19 NKJV But I say, did Israel not know? First Moses says: "I WILL PROVOKE YOU TO JEALOUSY BY THOSE WHO ARE NOT A NATION, I WILL MOVE YOU TO ANGER BY A FOOLISH NATION."

Romans 11:11 NKJV I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation *has come* to the Gentiles.

(22) For a fire is kindled in My anger, And shall burn to the lowest hell; It shall consume the earth with her increase, And set on fire the foundations of the mountains. (23) 'I will heap disasters on them; I will spend My arrows on them. (24) *They shall be* wasted with hunger, Devoured by pestilence and bitter destruction; I will also send against them the teeth of beasts, With the poison of serpents of the dust. (25) The sword shall destroy outside; *There shall be* terror within For the young man and virgin, The nursing child with the man of gray hairs. (26) I would have said, "I will dash them in pieces, I will make the memory of them to cease from among men," (27) Had I not feared the wrath of the enemy, Lest their adversaries should misunderstand, Lest they should say, "Our hand *is* high; And it is not the LORD who has done all this." (28) "For they *are* a nation void of counsel, Nor *is there any* understanding in them. (29) Oh, that they were wise, *that* they understood this, *That* they would consider their latter end! (30) How could one chase a thousand, And two put ten thousand to flight, Unless their Rock had sold them, And the LORD had surrendered them?

- This is absolutely terrifying! Here, God is basically saying that when God's people forsake Him, He in turn will forsake them and it's to their peril.
- Not only does He hide His face from them, in his anger kindled toward them, He also brings unspeakable and unthinkable horror upon them.
- This is all the result of turning away from God, and seeking a replacement god. But God will show mercy so other nations don't think they did it.

(31) For their rock *is* not like our Rock, Even our enemies themselves *being* judges. (32) For their vine *is* of the vine of Sodom And of the fields of Gomorrah; Their grapes *are* grapes of gall, Their clusters *are* bitter. (33) Their wine *is* the poison of serpents, And the cruel venom of cobras. (34) '*Is* this not laid up in store with Me, Sealed up among My treasures? (35) Vengeance is Mine, and recompense; Their foot shall slip in *due* time; For the day of their calamity *is* at hand, And the things to come hasten upon them.' (36) "For the LORD will judge His people And have compassion on His servants, When He sees that *their* power is gone, And *there is* no one *remaining*, bond or free. (37) He will say: 'Where *are* their gods, The rock in which they sought refuge? (38) Who ate the fat of their sacrifices, *And* drank the wine of their drink offering? Let them rise and help you, *And* be your refuge. (39) 'Now see that I, *even* I, *am* He, And *there is* no God besides Me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; Nor *is there any* who can deliver from My hand. (40) For I raise My hand to heaven, And say, "As I live forever, (41) If I whet My glittering sword, And My hand takes hold on judgment, I will render vengeance to My enemies, And repay those who hate Me. (42) I will make My arrows drunk with blood, And My sword shall devour flesh, With the blood of the slain and the captives, From the heads of the leaders of the enemy.'" (43) "Rejoice, O Gentiles, *with* His people; For He will avenge the blood of His servants, And render vengeance to His adversaries; He will provide atonement for His land *and* His people."

- These verses further reinforce how gracious and merciful God is. If He wasn't, He would give up on them, and in effect He would replace them.
- Here we are on this; I'm of the belief that everything God allows us to go through serves His purpose in the end which is to draw us near to Him.
- When we draw near, or nearer to Him, He in turn has permission to draw near to us, and when He does, it's only always grace that awaits us.

(44) So Moses came with Joshua the son of Nun and spoke all the words of this song in the hearing of the people. (45) Moses finished speaking all these words to all Israel, (46) and he said to them: "Set your hearts on all the words which I testify among you today, which you shall command your children to be careful to observe—all the words of this law. (47) For it *is* not a futile thing for you, because it *is* your life, and by this word you shall prolong *your* days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to possess." (48) Then the LORD spoke to Moses that very same day, saying: (49) "Go up this mountain of the Abarim, Mount Nebo, which *is* in the land of Moab, across from Jericho; view the land of Canaan, which I give to the children of Israel as a possession; (50) and die on the mountain which you ascend, and be gathered to your people, just as Aaron your brother died on Mount Hor and was gathered to his people; (51) because you trespassed against Me among the children of Israel at the waters of Meribah Kadesh, in the Wilderness of Zin, because you did not hallow Me in the midst of the children of Israel. (52) Yet you shall see the land before *you*, though you shall not go there, into the land which I am giving to the children of Israel."

- This is where it gets a little sad. As we near the end of this fabulous book, we also near the end of a marvelous life in the person of Moses.

- He will now be allowed to go up to Mount Nebo, where he can see the Promised-Land, then, after that, he will then die just as the Lord said.